



**NORTH CAROLINA COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM**  
*Dr. R. Scott Ralls, President*

August 8, 2008

**MEMORANDUM**

To: Community College Presidents

From: Dr. R. Scott Ralls

Subject: Small Business Center Network (SBCN) Fiscal Year 2008-2009 Small Business Center (SBC) Innovative Projects and Program Enhancement Request for Proposals (RFPs) Procedures

The North Carolina Community College System is pleased to announce the Small Business Center Network (SBCN) Fiscal Year 2008-2009 Small Business Center (SBC) Innovative Projects and Program Enhancement Request for Proposals (RFPs). The proposals are due in the System Office by 5:00 pm Wednesday, August 27, 2008.

Your SBC Director received a preliminary copy of the RFP on July 22, 2008, thus they should be well prepared to respond within the given timeframe.

The purpose of the SBCN Innovative Project Awards is to promote creativity in delivery of SBC programming and counseling services. The objective of the SBCN Performance Improvement Awards is to provide resources for SBCs to measurably increase programming and/or counseling outputs and economic impact. The minimum award for either grant type is \$1,000 and the maximum award for either grant is \$10,000. The total grant funds available for both grant types may not exceed \$60,000.

If you have any questions or need of assistance, please contact Dr. George Millsaps, SBCN State Director, at (919) 807-7217 ([millsapsg@nccommunitycolleges.edu](mailto:millsapsg@nccommunitycolleges.edu)).

Attachments

c: SBC Directors  
Continuing Education Administrators

CC08-175  
Email Copy



**Request for Proposals**

**Small Business Center Network (SBCN)  
Fund for  
Innovative Projects  
and  
Performance Improvement Projects**

**Fiscal Year 2008-2009**



## **SBCN Grants Fiscal Year 2008-2009**

### **General Information**

1. Grants will be awarded contingent upon funds availability and approval of the State Board of Community Colleges (SBCC). Proposals must indicate an implementation timeline to be completed by May 31, 2009.
2. SBCN grants will be awarded in amounts no less than \$1,000 and no more than \$10,000 for Innovative Project or Performance Improvement grants. Total available funding for Innovative Project and Performance Improvement grants is \$60,000 for FY 2008-2009.
3. All funds approved through these grants must adhere to state purchasing regulations and the policies and procedures outlined in the Accounting Procedures Manual.
4. All pages (except appendices) are to be prepared using the attached templates in Arial font, no less than 10-point in size, with all pages consecutively numbered.
5. Grant applications must include each item listed below and be assembled in the following order:
  - a) **Cover Page with original signatures of the community college president, chief financial officer, and SBC Director (All original signatures are to be on the same page.)**
  - b) **Proposal Checklist**
  - c) **Executive Summary – One page only (may be single-spaced)**
  - d) **Declaration of Funding Priority**
  - e) **Proposal Narrative – Maximum of four (4) pages, must be double-spaced with 1” margins**
  - f) **Budget Explanation – One page only (may be single-spaced)**
  - g) **Appendices – Maximum of five (5) pages (e.g. letters of commitment, collaborative arrangements). Optional, but highly recommended. Supporting documents **MUST** be specific to this project.**
6. Six hard copies of each proposal (one original and five photocopies), stapled with no binding, assembled in the order noted above, must be submitted.
7. Package six copies of the proposal with:
  - a) A letter signed by the community college president requesting the SBCN grant
  - b) CD of prepared proposal documents in Word and Excel formats only – No .pdf files (appendix documents do not have to be on CD)
8. Send completed application package to Dr. George Millsaps, SBCN State Director, using the appropriate address below, depending on method of delivery.

9. Email and Fax copies will not be accepted.
10. Applications must be properly addressed and received in the System Office by 5:00 p.m. on Wednesday, August 27, 2008, to be considered. Early submissions are accepted and encouraged.

SEND VIA UNITED STATES MAIL TO:

Dr. George Millsaps, State Director  
Small Business Center Network  
North Carolina Community College System Office  
5003 Mail Service Center  
Raleigh, NC 27699-5003

VIA EXPRESS OR HAND DELIVERY TO:

Dr. George Millsaps, State Director  
Small Business Center Network  
North Carolina Community College System Office  
200 West Jones Street  
Raleigh, NC 27603

### **Grant Application Overview**

The Small Business Center Network (SBCN) grant opportunities for innovative projects and performance improvement are made possible with funding from the NCCCS Small Business Center Network state appropriations for the purpose of strengthening the entrepreneurial base throughout the state by enhancing the SBCN and its member SBCs. The SBCN grants will be administered by the North Carolina Community College System (NCCCS), Economic & Workforce Development Division, Small Business Center Network.

#### **Innovative Projects**

The objective of the Innovative Projects awards is to spawn creativity in SBC programming and counseling service delivery. Minimum award \$1,000. Maximum award \$10,000.

#### **Program Enhancements**

The objective of the Performance Improvement awards is to provide resources for SBCs to measurably increase programming and/or counseling outputs and economic impact. Minimum award \$1,000. Maximum award \$10,000.

Total Combined funding for both types of grants is \$60,000.

## **Rationale**

Small businesses account for 99.7% of all employer firms, employ 50.6% of the private sector workforce, represent 97% of all the exporters of goods, and create 60 – 80% of all the net new jobs annually. Since its inception in 1984, the Small Business Center Network has been the North Carolina Community College System's sole program dedicated specifically to assisting this critical facet of our state's economy. Annually the SBCN assists over 70,000 North Carolinians through seminars/workshops, counseling, and referrals.

Given the significant economic impact of the small business sector in North Carolina and the historically limited funding of the Small Business Center Network, it is imperative that the NCCCS SBCN provide resources for local SBCs to spawn creativity and improve services.

## **Eligibility**

All North Carolina community colleges are eligible to submit proposals for Small Business Center Network awards. A college may submit more than one proposal as long as each proposal represents a separate and distinct project. Colleges may submit proposals for either or both the Innovative Project or Performance Improvement awards.

## **Innovative Projects**

The Innovative project awards are available to North Carolina Community College SBCs to develop and deliver creative SBC programming and counseling services. Examples of the types of expenses eligible to support these activities include: (This list is not meant to be exhaustive; SBCN welcomes all proposals that will advance SBC innovation.)

- Professional and speaker fees
- Media development
- Web development
- Supplies
- Materials
- Marketing
- Tuition (if a link to enhanced SBC outputs can be demonstrated)
- Updating or creating new SBC curricula
- Developing new modes of delivery for SBC programs
- Adopting new teaching methods
- Efforts to increase student retention
- Improving articulation agreements
- Initiatives to expand outreach and access to historically underserved populations and rural places
- Initiatives to target business sectors
- Initiatives to increase Small Business success rates

### Performance Improvement

The Performance Improvement awards are available to North Carolina Community College SBCs to measurably increase programming and/or counseling outputs and economic impact of the SBC. Examples of the types of expenses eligible to support these activities include: (This list is not meant to be exhaustive; SBCN welcomes all proposals that will advance SBC program quality, outputs, or outcomes.)

- Center or staff assessments
- Additional counseling capacity
- Speaker and/or workshop development
- Advertising
- Marketing
- Web design
- Brochures
- Printing
- Media development
- Market Analysis
- Supplies
- Materials
- Software
- Equipment (must be primarily for SBC use and transfer to other programs is restricted for 3 yrs).
- Tuition (if a link to enhanced SBC quality or outputs can be demonstrated)
- Updating or creating new SBC curricula
- Developing new modes of delivery for SBC programs
- Adopting new teaching methods
- Efforts to increase student retention
- Improving articulation agreements
- Initiatives to expand outreach and access to historically underserved populations and rural places
- Initiatives to target business sectors
- Initiatives to increase small business success rates

Modifying, upgrading or enhancing facilities or construction of new buildings or building additions, and room or facility rental is not a permissible use of these funds. Community colleges must utilize other funding sources for necessary or required capital improvements related to this request. Ensuring proper safety requirements is of critical importance.

### Requirements

A key element of the SBCN initiative is sharing and collaboration within the NC SBCN. All products developed with SBCN funding must be shared across the system. In addition to submitting all products to the SBCN, it is expected that all award recipients will present their results at a SBCN meeting.

Any instructional products (content or delivery) should include a Train-the-Trainer opportunity as an objective/deliverable. By providing training to instructors of other North Carolina community college SBCs, SBCN funds can be leveraged for increased impact across the state.

It is understood that any products created by SBCN grants are the property of the North Carolina Community College System. No institution or community college staff that is awarded a grant may sell, market, or otherwise profit from commercial activity based on these products. Because the SBCN is an economic development catalyst funded by the state of North Carolina for the benefit of its citizens, no product may be shared outside the state.

SBCN distance learning courses must comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and must utilize effective design strategies. Technical assistance will be provided by SBCN to those grants which include distance learning components.

If the project objectives are meant to serve local industry, specific support for the plan should be shown in the appendix.

All grantees must agree to identify that they are partners in the state-wide SBCN by giving appropriate recognition to SBCN as the funding source on college websites, materials, media releases, and presentations. For guidance related to appropriate SBCN attribution, contact Dr. George Millsaps, SBCN State Director, 919-807-7217, millsapsg@nccommunitycolleges.edu.

SBCN awards are not designed to fund on-going projects. Grant proposals for projects of this nature must indicate how the college will sustain the project after the initial SBCN funding period.

Two reports documenting project expenditures and how the results relate to the proposal's stated goals and objectives will be required by the NCCCS SBCN. A Closing Report will be due within 30 days of the end of the award, and an Impact Report will be due one year after the end of the award. Each grant proposal must indicate how the results will be tracked during the follow-up one year period.

Application package must meet the guidelines outlined under General Information and must comply with the SBCN Program Guidelines.

### **Restrictions**

The following will not be allowable usages of Small Business Center Network funds:

- ◆ Salary enhancements
- ◆ Stipends
- ◆ Food
- ◆ Promotional Give-aways
- ◆ Clothing

## **Funding Priorities**

- **Sustainability and transferability**  
Extra consideration will be given to those SBCs who can demonstrate that their efforts can be sustained and are transferable to other SBCs.
- **Economic development and/or service area impact**  
Projects and activities which can demonstrate a measurable economic development impact (jobs, sales, taxes) and/or favorably impact the SBC service area will be given extra consideration.
- **Matching funds and/or partnerships:**  
Extra consideration will be given to those projects that include matching local funds and/or partnerships with other organizations.
- **Underserved populations and business sectors**  
Projects and activities which target underserved populations (such as minorities, veterans, and millenials) or business sectors (such as exporting, motorsports, agribusiness, government procurement, and green-businesses) will be given extra consideration.

## **Proposal Narrative and Rating Criteria**

Applicants will submit to the NCCCS SBCN a proposal narrative that includes:

- ◆ **Statement and Determination of Need (10 points)** – *Describe the need, how the need was assessed (e.g. market analysis, discussions with business partners, etc.), and how this project addresses this need (e.g. benefit to clients, community, college, industry, state, other SBCs)*
- ◆ **Project Rationale (10 points)** – *Describe how the project will fulfill the objectives of the grant*
- ◆ **Connection to Stated Funding Priority (25 points)** – *If applicable, describe how the project meets the criteria outlined in the identified funding priorities listed above.*
- ◆ **Anticipated Outcomes (15 points)** – *Describe the goals and objectives of the project, how they will be measured, and how they address the need established above.*
- ◆ **Project Deliverables (15 points)** – *List and describe each deliverable and how it will be measured both in terms of output and outcome.*
- ◆ **Implementation Plan (15 points)**  
*Describe the activities involved in carrying out the proposal, to include:*



- **Timeline** – indicating (at least quarterly) work to be completed and funds to be expended by the end of the award period, May 31, 2008.
  - **Dissemination Plan** – outlining anticipated sharing of project results and deliverables with the SBCN.
  - **Evaluation Plan for Follow-up** – explaining anticipated methods of tracking or determining the impact of the project through the year following the end of the award period. (One of the requirements of the 2008-2009 FY grants is an impact report due one year after close of grant.)
- ◆ **Budget Explanation (10 points)** – Describe the rationale for the project expenditures and their connection to anticipated outcomes

### **Budget Guidelines**

In addition to the Budget Explanation, proposals must also include the following budget information:

- ◆ Summary Budget of Line Item expenditures
- ◆ Detailed list of supplies and equipment to be purchased, with a description of use

### **Proposal Submission**

Six copies (original and five photocopies) and CD containing final version documents must be submitted as outlined under General Information.

Colleges not meeting the submission requirements risk proposals being administratively declined.

### **Review and Approval Process**

A panel will review all grant proposals, ranking them and making recommendations to the State Board of Community Colleges for their consideration. The State Board of Community Colleges has final approval authority and reserves the right to reject any or all of the panel's recommendations. Awards contingent upon funds availability.

### **Important Dates**

- August 27, 2008, 5 pm, grant proposals due in System Office
- September 19, 2008, review panel recommendations presented to State Board of Community Colleges for approval
- May 31, 2009, end of grant implementation period
- June 30, 2009, end of project report due
- June 30, 2010, impact report due

**Fiscal Year 2008-2009  
Request for Proposals Process for NCCCS SBCN Grant Awards**

**Cover Page**

**College Name**

**Award type:** Innovative Project                       Program Enhancement

**Project Name**

**Amount Requested \$**

**SBC Director Information**

Name

Title

Mailing Address

City    State                      Zip Code

Phone    Fax

Email Address

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The College agrees to provide adequate staffing for project success, attend mandatory meetings, convene an advisory committee, participate in periodic conference calls, submit periodic evaluation documents and final report, and share project results with other NC community colleges.

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Signature, President

The submitted budget meets local community college financial policies and guidelines

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Signature, Chief Financial Officer

The Small Business Center Director agrees to oversee the project, attend mandatory meetings, participate in periodic conference calls, submit periodic evaluation documents and final report, and share project results with other NC community colleges.

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Signature, Small Business Center Director

**Fiscal Year 2008-2009  
Request for Proposals Process for NCCCS SBCN Grant Awards**

**Proposal Checklist**

- Completed Cover Page with original signatures of President, Chief Financial Officer, and Small Business Center Director (all original signatures must be on same page)
- One-page Executive Summary - 1 page only, 1" margins, Arial font, no less than 10-point in size (may be single-spaced)
- Declaration of Funding Priority
- Proposal Narrative – Four (4) pages maximum, must be double-spaced, 1" margins, Arial font, no less than 10-point in size
- Budget Explanation - 1 page only, 1" margins, Arial font, no less than 10-point in size
- Appendices - 5 pages maximum (e.g. letters of support or collaboration) Optional, but HIGHLY recommended
- Submission - Six complete copies (original and five photocopies)
- Submission - CD containing all prepared proposal documents (excluding appendices) in Word and Excel formats (no pdf files)
- Submission - Letter requesting SBCN award signed by college president (one original included with application package)

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**Timeline**

- **August 27, 2008, 5 pm, grant proposals due in System Office**
- **September 19, 2008, review panel recommendations presented to State Board of Community Colleges for approval**
- **May 31, 2009, end of grant implementation period**
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- **June 30, 2010, impact report due**

**Fiscal Year 2008-2009  
Request for Proposals Process for NCCCS SBCN Grant Awards**

**I. One Page Executive Summary**

**College Name**

**Award type:** Innovative Project  Program Enhancement

**Project Name**

**Amount Requested \$**

**Project Description:**

**Project Goals:**

**Project Objectives:**

**Plan for Project Sustainability, if applicable:**

**Fiscal Year 2008-2009  
Request for Proposals Process for NCCCS SBCN Grant Awards**

**II. Funding Priority**

**Check the applicable funding priority, if any:**

- Sustainability and transferability**
- Economic development and/or service area impact**
- Matching funds and/or partnerships**
- Underserved populations and business sectors**

**Fiscal Year 2008-2009  
Request for Proposals Process for NCCCS SBCN Grant Awards**

**IV. Proposal Narrative** (limit 4 pages, double-spaced)

**Statement and Determination of Need:**

**Project Rationale:**

**Connection to Stated Funding Priority:**

**Anticipated Outcomes:**

**Project Deliverables:**

**Implementation Plan:**

**Partnerships:**

**Budget Explanation:**